

FACT SHEET

What are the Different Solutions Being Used to Deliver Interpretation and Translation Services? Which Solution is best for me?

In order to meet varying language/interpretation needs, service providers use different solutions (methods/approaches) to communicate with clients with limited English proficiency. These are described below. To understand the advantages and disadvantages of each solution please refer to [to: \..\solutions\Interpretation and Translation Solutions.pdf](#).

Interpretation:

- **Face-to-Face/On-Site Interpretation:** Interpreting done by an interpreter who is physically in the presence of both the service user and service provider. Face-to-face interpretation using a qualified¹ interpreter tends to be the preferred solution for human service providers.
- **Telephone Interpretation/Conference Call Interpreting:** A form of remote interpreting which takes place over the phone between three or more people.
- **Video-Conferencing:** Remote interpreting that makes use of a video camera when one or more of the interpreting parties are not present at the same location. It enables the parties to see and hear each other via a television monitor.
- **Voiced-over video:** Contents of standard educational/informational videos are voiced over or “*dubbed*” in different languages to allow transfer of standard information in languages other than English/French.
- **Sight Translation:** Conversion from written material in one language to a spoken version in another language. It also occurs when an instant oral version is required of a written text.
- **Live Webcam Chat:** Some remote interpretation is done through a Webcam (a video camera which feeds images and sounds in real time into a computer or computer network). Interpreting parties can log on to live chat portals such as *Messenger* and *Skype* and begin interpretation sessions. This allows all interpreting parties to see and hear each other via a computer monitor.
- **Message Relay:** Interpreting where an interpreter receives a message from one party and subsequently transmits it to another party in the target language². An example would be when a receptionist phones a service user to provide information regarding an upcoming appointment.

¹ Qualified refers to interpreters who are trained according to a program generally accepted as being 70 – 120 hours in duration and which includes core competencies in the areas of ethics, skills and sector specific knowledge.

² Language *into* which translation or interpretation is carried out (National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services)



Translation

- On-line Translation/Machine Translation: This refers to any kind of automatic translation, including translation software, hand-held translators, and online translators. For example, there are a number of free translation sites on-line. The client and service providers need only type the necessary words/phrases in source language³ and the software provides textual translation in the target language. While this is a cost effective and quick response to interpretation needs, the quality of machine translation can be poor. Although machine translation technology is constantly improving, it has yet to understand and interpret the full breadth of vocabulary, grammar, context and nuances in both source and target languages. Also, many languages of lesser diffusion (LLD)⁴ are still unavailable through machine translation. On-line translators can give some idea about the meaning of a sentence and are useful if a service provider is only seeking the gist of an exchange and not precision interpretation/translation. It is also useful to convey simple statements to the client. This method is best used when face-to-face and remote interpreters are not available.
- Google™ Translate: Currently available in 55 languages, Google™ Translate is an on-line translation device frequently used by service providers to translate.
How Google Translate is used:
 - City of Ottawa: The City of Ottawa webpages can be translated in 52 languages (including English and French), and is powered by Google™ Translate. Many LLDs are not available for translation on this site and the existing languages are not entirely accurate. In light of this, in its disclaimer, the City of Ottawa states that it *“assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of translations that you perform using the Google™ Translate tool. Google™ Translate is third party automated translator, and, as such, may make mistakes that a skilled human translator would not otherwise make.”* However, the webpage serves as a useful informational tool for service users with LEP/LFP.
- Other Technology: MedBridge®, a point-of-care technology-based language application that provides health professional in the emergency department with a method of communicating with LEP and deaf patients. LEP patients hear the voice of a native speaker through the use of audio. Deaf patients see a native deaf signer through the use of video. MedBridge® offers statements, close-ended questions and detailed lists used in day-to-day hospital encounters. These statements have been translated into 16 languages including American Sign Language.

³ Language from which translation or interpretation is carried out (National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services)

⁴ Languages which are less common, often reflecting new and emerging immigrant communities

